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ABSTRACT

The rationale for and nature of the videotaped portion of the pedagogy test of the Content Mastery Examinations for Educators (CMEE) available in fall 1990 are evaluated. The videotape subtest described is expansive and time consuming, but appears to be effective and acceptable for its target audience of beginning teachers. Each form of the CMEE pedagogy test begins with approximately 15 videotape-based test items. Following the videotape portion of the test, examinees are administered approximately 120 multiple-choice, paper-and-pencil items. Live-action and scripted-staged approaches to video production are used in developing the tapes. Test items deal with central pedagogical concepts that are represented in the videotaped scenes. Test development staff have experimented with the use of selected-response and constructed-response items and chose the former for the CMEE pedagogy subtest. Kindergarten through grade 12 are represented in the videotape episodes. The subtest requires not only that examinees have a good working knowledge of pedagogical principles, but also be able to observe and identify the application or misapplication of those principles as they occur during classroom instruction. The tests can be tailored to meet specific state requirements. (TJH)

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VIDEOTAPED-BASED TEACHER TESTS:

BELLS, WHISTLES OR BONA FIDE ASSESSMENT?*

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Almost all states now require prospective teachers and administrators to pass licensure tests prior to the issuance of a certificate/credential/license that allows individuals to function as teachers or administrators. Although the subject areas in which tests are required vary from state to state, this licensure test requirement is a relatively recent phenomenon. Its origins can be traced directly to the accountability oriented legislative mandates that began to be instituted nationwide fifteen years ago, requiring students to pass minimum competency tests before being granted a high school diploma. After the installation of tests that obliged students to display minimum proficiencies in the basic skill areas, many state legislators succumbed to the persuasive argument that "if we're requiring students to demonstrate their competence, why shouldn't we expect teachers to do the same?"

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*A presentation delivered as part of the symposium "Expanding the Options: A New National Licensure Test for Educators" at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Boston, April 16-20.

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In rapid succession, legislation was passed, and teacher licensure test hurdles were created for prospective teachers. The rationale underlying the legislative enactment of such requirements is simple: Teachers should know the subject matter they are going to teach. Although the initial thrust of the new licensure tests was to make sure that, for example, biology teachers knew enough biology content to teach students satisfactorily, some states have also required prospective teachers to pass a test of basic skills (reading, writing, and mathematics) and/or pedagogy. It is rare to find a state today that does not require an aspiring teacher to make a passing score on a basic skills test, a subject matter test, or a pedagogy test.

Once a state legislature has implemented a licensure test requirement, where is such a test to be found? For the most part, the only available teacher licensure tests belong to Educational Testing Services (ETS) in the form of the NTE Program (formally the National Teacher Examinations). If state officials do not think that the off-the-shelf NTE tests meet their state's needs, the only option they have is organize and finance a customized test-development effort. The costs of such customized test development are substantial in terms of both headaches and dollars. Even though many states might like to have customized teacher licensure tests, few states can afford them.

Given the importance of having quality teacher licensure tests available to states and the few alternatives available, National Computer Systems (NCS), one of the nation's largest and most experienced processors of test results, has embarked on an ambitious and innovative program to expand the teacher licensure assessment options by making available in the fall of 1990 the Content Mastery Examinations for Educators (CMEE). CMEE is currently being developed for NCS by IOX Assessment Associates (IOX). The remainder of this paper will describe (1) the rationale for the videotape-based portion of the Pedagogy Test, (2) the nature of the CMEE videotape-based portion of the Pedagogy Test, and (3) whether such a videotape-based approach is merely a developer's "bell and whistle" or, in fact, a bona fide assessment strategy.

Rationale

Why go to the time, trouble, and considerable expense to have a videotape-based portion of a teacher licensure pedagogy test? Quite simply because with today's available technology, a test of pedagogy has no excuse for not including a look at some real classrooms where real teachers and real students are engaged in the teaching/learning process.

Is a videotape-based portion of a pedagogy test expensive? You bet. Does it take a lot of time and trouble to organize and develop? You bet. Wouldn't it be more cost-effective to stick

to good old multiple-choice, paper-and-pencil tests? You bet. But the truth is that the teaching profession deserves better.

The videotape-based portion of the CMEE Pedagogy Test is far from the final step in the assessment of one's pedagogical prowess. But it is better than what is currently available.

As teachers and administrators commented during recent item review sessions conducted across the nation, "I can relate to this. Those are actual teachers in their classrooms doing actual teaching."

Description

Each form of the CMEE Pedagogy Test will begin with approximately 15 videotape-based test items. Following the videotape-based portion of the Pedagogy Test, examinees will be administered approximately 120 multiple-choice, paper-and-pencil test items. The content from which both the videotape-based and paper/pencil items are derived is based on the CMEE Pedagogy Test content outline.

There are currently three different methods of production that are available to create videotape-based test items: scripted-staged, live-action, and coached-stand-in. (See Stanley, 1989, for a more detailed description of each approach.) The CMEE videotape-based portion of the Pedagogy Test currently

incorporates the live-action and scripted-staged approaches to video production.

When examinees initially register by mail to take the CMEE Pedagogy Test, they will receive a brochure that describes the two components of the test and contains sample test items. In addition, they will receive a detailed content outline of the pedagogy content eligible for testing.

On the day of test administration, Pedagogy Test examinees will be taken to a testing room equipped with the necessary videocassette recorder (VCR) and video monitors. Each examinee will be given an examination booklet and asked to read a short description regarding the videotape-based portion of the CMEE Pedagogy Test. A few minutes later, the videotape will be started and the remaining portion of the videotape-based test will be paced by the videotape itself.

The videotape begins with an introduction to the videotape portion of the CMEE Pedagogy Test. The introduction describes the sequence of events that will take place for each test item. The sequence includes:

- a brief introduction to each teaching episode
- a 3-5 minute segment of an actual instructional sequence
- oral directions to the examinee to turn to

the appropriate page in the examination booklet, read the test question, and answer the question

- an appropriate time lapse allowing examinees to read and answer the test item (approximately 35 seconds)
- a reminder to examinees to answer the test question, if they have not already done so
- a final allowance of approximately 10 seconds for late-answering examinees.

This sequence is repeated for each videotape-based test item.

The test items that examinees encounter when they "turn the page" of their examination booklets are multiple-choice in nature. The items deal with central pedagogical concepts that are represented in the item's videotaped scene. Examinees are asked, for example, to identify (from four options) the nature of the activity (e.g., "guided practice") in which the teacher was having students engage.

During the past three years, in relationship to a customized test-development project for another state, IOX staff have experimented seriously with the use of both selected-response and constructed-response test items for such videotape-based examinations. For the CMEE Pedagogy Test, it was concluded that a selected-response approach was preferable. Remember, the CMEE

Pedagogy Test is designed for beginning teachers. To discern a beginning teacher's mastery of pedagogical content, it was decided that the use of multiple-choice items based on the live-action classroom sequences would be most appropriate.

The videotape portion of the CMEE Pedagogy Test requires not only that examinees have a good working knowledge of pedagogical principles, but also be able to observe and identify the application or misapplication of those principles as they occur during classroom instruction.

Because it is important for a prospective teacher to be able to observe and analyze various teaching episodes without having been cued regarding the phenomena on which to focus, examinees are not permitted to read the test item until after they have watched the 3-5 minute classroom segment.

Because the CMEE Pedagogy Test was created to assess teachers' pedagogical knowledge across grades K-12, the videotaped teaching episodes are representative of the entire K-12 grade span. Additionally, every effort was made to have various ethnic groups represented by both the teachers and students who appear in the videotape vignettes.

State officials who wish to adopt the CMEE Pedagogy Test will also have the option, albeit not without additional expense, to have the videotape (1) produced using teachers and students in

their state (2) tailored to meet specific licensure/certification requirements in their state, or (3) organized around a constructed-response format rather than a selected-response format.

A Necessity?

Are videotape-based tests of prospective teachers' knowledge a mere sales gimmick or, rather, a bona fide assessment strategy? Probably a little of both. It is certainly a bell and whistle by virtue of the fact that it is an innovative and appealing approach. And, if one considers the move toward more authentic assessment for students to be meritorious, then a plea for teacher assessment most likely will follow. As noted at the outset of this analysis, trends in student assessment are often followed by similar trends in teacher assessment.

Because the stimuli on which the Pedagogy Test's videotape-based items are more verisimilitudinous than merely verbal stimuli, it seems reasonable that our inferences about an examinee's mastery of pedagogical content will be more valid than were we to base those inferences exclusively on test items of the traditional paper-and-pencil variety. Clearly, by using both videotape-based and paper-and-pencil items, the CMEE Pedagogy Test's likelihood of yielding more valid score-based inferences are enhanced.

Reference

Stanley, S.J. (1989). Alternative Paradigms for Creating Videotape-based Teacher Tests. A presentation delivered at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, California.